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DE RUEHEK #0466 1341014
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R 141014Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2188
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3073
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1369
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3416
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2802
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BISHKEK 000466

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2019

TAGS: PGOV KDEM KG

SUBJECT: AK JOL BACKS KYRGYZ PRESIDENT BAKIYEV'S REELECTION

Classified By: A/DCM Robert Burgess, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) The pro-Presidential Ak Jol Party held its Party Congress May 1, endorsing incumbent President Kurmanbek Bakiyev as its candidate for the July 23 Presidential election. The meeting followed a Soviet-era script with loyal farmers, workers, teachers, retirees, and others heralding Bakiyev's achievements and singing a new Ak Jol Party anthem. One speaker even praised Bakiyev's "courage" in closing Manas Air Base.

¶2. (SBU) Embassy observers, who were invited to attend the event, noted little discourse among the delegates, many of whom appeared to sleep through the event. Seated in the audience near Prime Minister Chudinov, Embassy overheard one party insider whisper to Chudinov his hope that the party platform, plans, and charter amendments would be adopted immediately, as debate, in his view, was not needed.

¶3. (C) In fact, the Party took steps to make sure there was no real debate at the Congress. A week prior to the event, the Ak Jol political council expelled deputy party leader Elmira Ibraimova. Ibraimova had made a public appeal to Ak Jol members to hold off endorsing a candidate until Bakiyev answered some tough questions about his and the government's performance. Interestingly, even though the Congress took place just seven weeks after the suspicious death of Ak Jol founder and former Bakiyev Chief of Staff Medet Sadyrkulov, and even though many insiders suspect Bakiyev family involvement in the death -- there was no discord over Sadyrkulov's death during the Congress.

¶4. (SBU) Most of the proceedings took place in Kyrgyz, with only a few speakers addressing the Congress in Russian.
(Note: The main opposition political gathering, which took place in late April to nominate former Prime Minister Almaz Atambayev as its Presidential candidate, also was conducted largely in Kyrgyz. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) Representatives of the ruling parties of the Russian Federation, China, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan attended the Ak Jol Congress to express support. Since its 2007 creation, Ak Jol has achieved electoral dominance (often through disputed vote counts) and may view the Russian,

Chinese, Kazakh and Tajik parties as models to emulate. Ak Jol inked cooperation agreements with the Russian and Tajik parties.

¶6. (C) Comment: Bakiyev's selection as the Ak Jol candidate was widely anticipated, and given the Kyrgyz White House's past predilections of using administrative resources to stymie opposition candidates, Bakiyev's reelection is also generally expected.

GFOELLER